



# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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### **AIR CONDITIONING RECYCLING COMPANY OWNER INDICTED FOR UNLAWFUL VENTING OF CFCs**

Paul I. Perez, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, announced today the arrest of Joel C. Patterson and the unsealing of a fifteen-count indictment charging Patterson, age 64, with knowingly venting chlorofluorocarbons ("CFCs") into the environment, in violation of the Clean Air Act, Title 42, United States Code, Sections 7671g(c)(1) and 7413(c)(1). Joel C. Patterson is the owner and operator of Joel C. Patterson Air Conditioning Recycling, located at 6170 Idlewild Street #B, Fort Myers, Florida.

When released into the environment, CFCs cause damage to the stratospheric ozone layer, which protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation. The use of CFC refrigerant in new air conditioners is banned under federal law. However, older air conditioners continue to use CFC refrigerant for cooling. To prevent the release of such refrigerant, the Clean Air Act requires persons who service or dispose of air conditioners

to recover the refrigerant for recycling or proper disposal. The indictment charges that Patterson unlawfully knowingly vented and released CFCs into the environment from September 5, 2000, to August 7, 2001.

If convicted, on each count the defendant faces a maximum term of imprisonment without parole of five years, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of not more than three years.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigations Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey F. Michelland of the Fort Myers Division of the United States Attorney's Office.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal law, and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until the entry of a guilty plea, or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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